

12420 STONEHAVEN LANE (HOUSE)  
(The Cape Cod)  
(The Ardsley)  
Belair at Bowie, Maryland  
Bowie  
Prince George's County  
Maryland

HABS MD-1255  
*MD-1255*

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### 12420 STONEHAVEN LANE (HOUSE) (The Cape Cod) (The Ardsley)

HABS No. MD-1255

**NOTE:** Please see the following historical reports for additional information about the history of Belair at Bowie, Maryland:

Belair at Bowie, Maryland (overview)	HABS No. MD-1253
12418 Stonehaven Lane (The Cape Cod)	HABS No. MD-1254
12408 Stonehaven Lane (The Rancher)	HABS No. MD-1257
12500 Swirl Lane (The Colonial, 4 bedroom)	HABS No. MD-1260
12100 Tulip Grove Drive (The Rancher)	HABS No. MD-1263
12400 Shadow Lane (The Colonial, 3 bedroom)	HABS No. MD-1264
Belair Bath & Tennis Club	HABS No. MD-1265
12401 Sussex Lane (The Manor House)	HABS No. MD-1267
12405 Sussex Lane (The Rancher)	HABS No. MD-1269
12413 Salem Lane (The Country Clubber)	HABS No. MD-1270
12406 Skylark Lane (The Country Clubber)	HABS No. MD-1271

**Location:** 12420 Stonehaven Lane, "Belair at Bowie, Maryland," Bowie, Prince Georges County, Maryland.

**Significance:** The Cape Cod at 12420 Stonehaven Lane is located in the Somerset section and was constructed in 1960-61. Although larger and better equipped, The Cape Cod model at Belair was the direct descendent of the expansion Cape Cods that Levitt and Sons introduced in 1947 at Levittown, New York. It was the least expensive model in the line at Belair, yet, because of the construction economies inherent to building forms having multiple stacked levels, was not the smallest in total square footage (The Rancher was 150 square feet smaller, but more expensive because it was a one-story house). Levitt and Sons also saved money with this model because the façade, which received the most expensive materials, was only a single story and not especially broad. In a relatively rare instance within Belair, the house at number 12420 is located next door to another Cape Cod (at number 12418) rendered in the model's alternate façade design.

**Historian:** James A. Jacobs, HABS

**Description:** The Cape Cod model was organized into three parts: a central portion receiving most of the design emphasis with two flanking wings. In both variations, the center portion, comprising two-thirds of the main portion of the house, was defined by a break forward in the roof, creating an optical illusion that suggests the remaining one-third is a wing, perhaps thought to evoke a later addition. In number 12420, the center is

further articulated through the use of brick cladding. A one-story garage wing is positioned to one side of this section of the house, with its front and that of the other “wing” sheathed in cedar shingles. The front door is located at the approximate center of the main portion of the house. The version of The Cape Cod without the front porch has two double-hung windows on the side of the door nearer the garage and a single, double-hung window on the other side. The remainder of the house appears to still be clad in the original asbestos shingles. The windows, doors, and shutters are all replacements for the originals.

**History:** Levitt and Sons is permanently linked to the story-and-a-half, twentieth-century house type known most widely as the “Cape Cod,” which referenced the low-slung vernacular dwellings found in coastal New England. The straightforward, rectangular Cape Cod form allowed builders flexibility in room arrangement, economy in construction, and a distinct market advantage over single-story houses—none of which was lost on Levitt and Sons, whose fame and industry influence was founded on the 17,500 of them that were built at the first Levittown on Long Island between 1947 and 1951.

Levitt and Sons marketed the lowest-priced model available at Belair as an “old New England favorite;” however, aside from its basic form, the lineage of the Cape Cod as it is most widely known today was wholly postwar.<sup>1</sup> Ignoring the attached garage and laundry and a slightly larger footprint, the Belair Cape Cod’s first-floor plan essentially featured the same types of rooms as New York’s Rancher, Pennsylvania’s Jubilee, and New Jersey’s House A models.<sup>2</sup> In creating the version that was part of their 1961 product line used to launch Belair, the company returned the entrance to the middle of the street façade, which worked well with the more overtly traditional façade variations devised for the model.

The Cape Cod’s neo-traditional detailing on its street elevation presented a blandly appealing face to prospective buyers, masking an undeniably modern interior that incorporated many of the latest planning trends for domestic space and was fully equipped with a full range of appliances and mechanical systems (fig. 1). As found in all of Belair’s houses, The Cape Cod provided an integral garage, a separate laundry area with standard washing machine and matching clothes dryer, and, most notably, whole house central air conditioning—a luxury at the time expected only in the most expensive new houses. With central air conditioning and laundry equipment offered in all models, most prospective buyers were likely satisfied with kitchens that came equipped with only a stove and refrigerator; only the two highest priced models featured dishwashers and in-sink garbage disposers. Still, the kitchens in all of the models were efficiently arranged

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<sup>1</sup> Levitt and Sons, Inc., “Belair at Bowie, Maryland,” 1962, description for “The Cape Cod” and for information about included features and amenities. In author’s collection.

<sup>2</sup> Advertisement, “This Is Levittown, New Jersey,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* 13 Jul. 1958, sec. W: 34, House A.

with U-shaped layouts and nearly all included provisions for casual dining within or adjacent to the kitchen's work area, a feature fast becoming indispensable to middle-class buyers.

In addition to the highly desirable household equipment The Cape Cod notably contained four bedrooms; however, as the least expensive model at Belair, the model did not include a number of the features fast becoming expected in new houses by prospective middle-class buyers. Without a separate, or even screened entry, the front door opened directly into the living room, although its position did usefully keep traffic flow to one end of the room. The house also lacked two distinct dining areas; the "dining room" of The Cape Cod was entirely independent of the living room, but open to the kitchen. A breakfast bar integrated into the cabinetry and countertops of the kitchen workspace provided partial screening, yet also meant that the dining room had to accommodate both structured and unstructured meals. The Cape Cod model did provide two full bathrooms, one on each floor; however, neither was an en suite with the assumed master bedroom as was becoming increasingly common in new houses. When considering the other models offered at Belair, The Cape Cod was deficient in some of the elements desired by middle-class consumers, yet when compared to national statistics, the Cape Cod was well above average when considering overall size, room number, and amenities such as central air conditioning and an equipped kitchen and laundry. Indeed, in 1963, the *Washington Post* reported that the Cape Cod and Rancher models were the "two most popular houses" among buyers at Belair.<sup>3</sup>

**Selected Bibliography:**

Advertisement. "This Is Levittown, New Jersey." The Philadelphia Inquirer 13 Jul. 1958. Sec. W: 34.

"Cape Cod, Rancher Popular at Belair." The Washington Post 14 Sep. 1963. Sec. D: 16.

Levitt and Sons, Inc. "Belair at Bowie, Maryland." 1962.

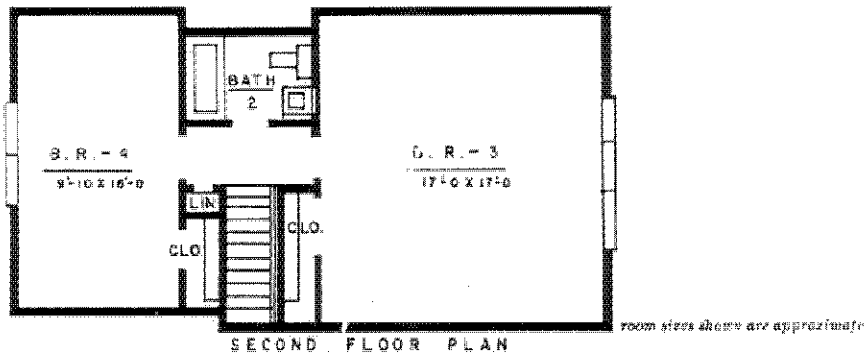
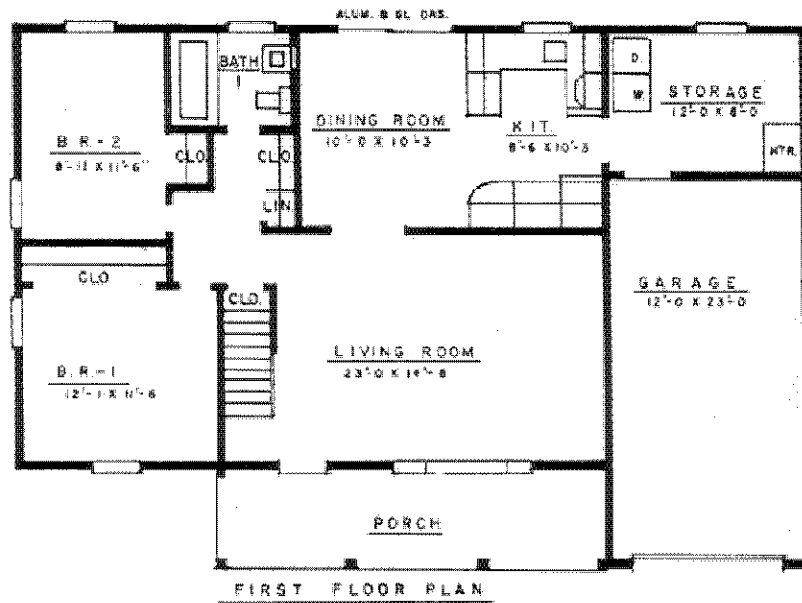
**Project Information:**

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<sup>3</sup> "Cape Cod, Rancher Popular at Belair," *The Washington Post* 14 Sep. 1963, sec. D: 16.

**APPENDIX A: ILLUSTRATIONS**



**Fig. 1.** The Cape Cod model, floor plans, 1964. These plans document the major changes Levitt and Sons made to The Cape Cod between 1960 and 1964. The major difference was the transposition of the dining room and kitchen. During the first years of construction at Belair, and the case with the house at 12420 Stonehaven Lane, the kitchen backed up to the first-floor bathroom and had a second interior entrance communicating with the hall by the bedrooms. Although less efficient in terms of plumbing, Levitt and Sons later thought that the laundry room was more logically entered from the kitchen than the dining room. These plans are also those for the alternate façade variation. In number 12420, the garage is flush with the front wall, decreasing the size of the garage and laundry/storage area. There is also no front porch, and the large picture window in the living room is, instead, two single windows. Author's collection.